Signature of Keeper

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

Historic name: Wabaunsee County Courthouse  2. Location  Alma  215 Kansas Avenue  Alma  Alma  Alma  Code KS  County Wabaunsee  Code 197 gip code 66401  3. State/Federal Agency Certification  As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1936, as amended, I hereby certifithat this X nonination requires for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 cfr Part 60.  In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria.  I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally.  Signature of certifying official  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.  State or Federal agency and bureau  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.  State or Federal agency and bureau  4. National Park Service Cartification  State or Federal agency and bureau  4. National Park Service Cartification  State or Federal agency and bureau  4. National Park Service Cartification  State or Federal agency in the National Register.  See continuation sheet  determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet  determined not eligible for the National Register.  Tenoved from the National Register.	1. Name of Property			
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removed from the National Register.	determined not eligible for the National Register			

Date of Action

Property Name Wabaunsee (	County Courthouse		
County and State Wabaunsee	County, Kansas		Page 2
5. Classification			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resource	s within Property
private	X building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
X public-local	district	1	buildings
public-State	site	anti-challe-bard-server	sites
public-Federal	structure	***************************************	structures
	object	WATER was also to the decision	objects
		1 .	0 Total
Name of related multiple prop Enter "N/A" if property is no multiple property listing.)	ot part of a		ting resources previously ational Register:
		4	
Historic County Courthouses of	of Kansas	0	
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GOVERNMENT: County Coun	actions.)	Current Function (Enter categorie  GOVERNMENT  Materials (Enter categori	s s from instructions.) C: County Courthouse es from instructions.) DNE: Limestone

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Property Name Wabaunsee County Courthouse		
County and State Wabaunsee County, Kansas		Page 3
8. Statement of Significance Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in for National Register listing.)	one or more boxes for the crite:	
$\underline{\underline{X}}$ A Property is associated with events that have of our history.	made a significant contribution	to the broad patterns
B Property is associated with the lives of per	sons significant in our past.	
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteri or represents the work of a master, or posse and distinguishable entity whose components	sses high artistic values, or re	
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,	information important in prehis	tory or history.
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes	that apply.)	
A owned by a religious institution or used for	religious purposes.	
B removed from its original location.		· .
C a birthplace or a grave.		
D a cemetery.		
E a reconstructed building, object, or structu	re.	
F a commemorative property.		
G less than 50 years of age or achieved signif	icance within the past 50 years.	
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
ARCHITECTURE	1931/32-50	N/A
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT		
	***************************************	
	Cultural Affiliation	
	N/A	
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
N/A	W.E. Glover, Architect	
	Shuss & Henderson, Contractors	

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation  $\times$  sheets.)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form	
Property Name Wabaunsee County Courthous	
County and State Wabaunsee County, Kansas	Page 4
9. Major Bibliographical References (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing	this form on one or more continuation sheets.}
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Frimary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individual listing	$oxed{X}$ State Historic Preservation Office
(36 CFR 67) has been requested	Other State agency
previously listed in the National Register	Federal agency
previously determined eligible by the National Register	Local government
designated a National Historic Landmark	University
recorded by Historic American Buildings	$oxed{X}$ Other
Survey #	Specify repository:
recorded by Historic American Engineering	Library and Archives Division, Kansas State
	Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas;
	Wabaunsee County History Museum, Alma, Kansa:
10. Geographical Data  Acreage of property <1	
UTM References	
1 1/4 7/3/4/5/1/0 4/3/2/1/4/3/0 3 / /// Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting	/
2 / //// //// 4 / ////	<u> </u>
See co	ntinuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the pro-	operty on a continuation sheet.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected	ed on a continuation sheet.)
11. Form Prepared By  name/title Dana Cloud and Sally F. Schwenk	
organization Historic Preservation Services, LLC	date April 30, 2000
street & number 818 Grand Boulevard, Suite 1150	telephone (816) 221-5133
city or town Kansas City	state <u>Missouri</u> zip code <u>64106</u>
Additional Documentation  Submit the following items with the completed form:  Continuation Sheets	
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the proper A sketch map for historic districts and properties having Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the property Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional	y. l items.)
Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPC name Wabaunsee County	
street & number 215 Kansas Avenue	telephone <u>(785) 765-2421</u>
city or town Alma	state KS zip code 66401

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 7

Page 1

Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

#### DESCRIPTION

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse is a Modern Movement building employing Art Deco styling. The four-story masonry structure occupies a full square block to the west of the Alma, Kansas historic central business district [Figure 1: City Plan of Alma, Kansas]. The courthouse shares the block with two parking lots: a handicapped accessible parking lot to the south of the courthouse and a staff parking lot to the northwest of the courthouse. The primary façade faces east onto Kansas Avenue. The courthouse is rectangular in plan and measures 150 feet wide by 75 feet deep by 35 feet high [Figure 2: Existing Site Plan]. The structure is of poured-in-place concrete construction with dressed Carthage stone veneer, and has an ashlar elevated foundation, square columns, and ornamented window spandrels. It has a flat roof defined by a parapet with zigzag detailing. The courthouse has excellent architectural integrity as it retains all of its original exterior and interior features, including its original casement windows and ornamental exterior doors [Photographs #1, #2, #3 and #4]. Erected in 1931–1932 as a county courthouse, the structure continues to serve as a county courthouse.

The courthouse has 11 bays on the east façade and seven bays on the west, north and south façades [Photographs #1 and #2]. The exterior is coursed, ashlar, Carthage stone backed by native stone, creating a total exterior wall thickness of 15 inches. It has a rusticated base terminated with a belt course that defines the ground floor. Lining the primary façade are ten geometric columns with square shafts and stylized fluted capitals. The end bays of the north, south and east façades project and feature window enframements with keystones and balconies that surround the first- and second-floor windows. Window spandrels, which feature stylized floral motifs set within octagonal medallions, separate the first- and second-floor windows at the north, south and east façades. Geometric zigzag detailing and fluted walls that reference a balustrade define the parapet [Photograph #8]. Copper downspouts fall from the parapet to ground level [Photograph #9].

The courthouse retains its original, paired, metal frame, casement windows. The courtroom and east stairwell casement windows also feature paired transom windows. Limestone matching that of the building encloses the first-floor window openings at the end bays of the west façade. Several window air-conditioning units somewhat compromise the exterior appearance; however, they may be removed without damage to the original materials or elements [*Photograph #3*].

The courthouse features a primary entrance on the east façade and secondary entrances on the north and south façades. The primary façade features ten geometric columns with square shafts and fluted capitals. Between the four central columns are original, metal frame doors with transoms that have ornamented metal grillwork. Above the entrance doors are metal spandrels with geometric and stylized floral ornamentation. A grand staircase, flanked by Art Deco style torcheres, rises from the ground level to an intermediate level between the ground and first floors [Photographs #5 and #6]. Lettering above the third-floor windows reads: "Wabaunsee County Court House." Paired, metal frame, storefront doors replaced the original doors at the secondary entrances. An additional entrance ramp down to the ground floor on the south façade serves the handicapped [Photograph #2].

The floor plan and space uses are typical of the majority of Kansas courthouses built during the same time period. A grand staircase at the east side of the building [Photograph #11] and a smaller side staircase at the south side of

Exterior construction information taken from: Author Unknown, "Wabaunsee County Court House Observes 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *The Signal-Enterprise* (10 December 1981): 1, 11.

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

the building [Photograph #13] provide access to each floor. The corridors run north and south. The ground floor houses the boiler room and offices. The ground floor entrances at the north and south façades are at grade level, with a new handicapped accessible entrance at the south façade near the c.1970 elevator. The first floor houses the offices of the county clerk, registrar of deeds, appraiser, treasurer, and county commissioners. The second floor houses the courtroom [Photograph #15], judge's chambers, jury room, and clerk of the county court's office. The fourth floor houses the sheriff's office and jail.

The interior finishes are also typical of the majority of Kansas courthouses built during the same time period. Interior finishes consist of terrazzo floors, plaster walls and cornices, wood doors and trim, marble wainscoting and staircase, acoustical ceiling tiles, terrazzo stair treads and risers [Photograph #11], and decorative iron balustrades at the south staircases. Original light fixtures and sconces also remain intact [Photographs #7, #10, #14 and #15]. A map of Wabaunsee County and its 13 townships is inlaid into the terrazzo flooring in the first-floor corridor [Photograph #12].

There are several memorial, historical markers on the courthouse grounds including: a monument erected in 1904 that honors the Spanish explorer Coronado who is said to have discovered the site in 1541; a World War I stone monument donated by the school children of the county in 1921; and a 1970 cone-shaped limestone monument donated by the American Legion in memory of all soldiers in American wars. There are also two limestone gun emplacements dating to World War I on the grounds, the cannons of which are missing.

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse has excellent architectural integrity despite the minor alterations mentioned above. Paired, metal-clad storefront doors replaced the original doors at the north and south entrances; however, the overall exterior appearance is not compromised as the remaining exterior features such as the masonry, metal-clad casement windows, geometric columns, and roofline are intact. All of the interior features such as the terrazzo flooring, plaster walls and cornices, wood doors and trim, marble wainscoting and staircases, and light fixtures remain. With the exception of the c.1970 elevator addition to the south side of the building, the floor plan configuration of each floor is intact as well. The construction of several small parking lots has impacted the building's historic setting. However, these intrusions occur on secondary elevations set back from the plane of the building's primary façade. Overall, the Wabaunsee County Courthouse not only has excellent architectural integrity, but it is also in excellent condition as a result of the care and attention given to the maintenance of the structure by a succession of county commissioners.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 7

Page 3

Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

**PHOTO LOG** 

Photographer:

Dana Cloud

Date of Photographs:

November 18, 1999

Location of Negatives:

Kansas State Historical Society

Cultural Resources Division 6425 S.W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099

Photo #	Subject	Camera Direction	
1.	Exterior of Courthouse	Southwest	
2.	Exterior of Courthouse	Northeast	
3.	Exterior of Courthouse	Southeast	
4.	Exterior of Courthouse	Northwest	
5.	Detail of East (Main) Entrance	Northwest	
6.	Entrance Door and Torchere at East (Main) Entrance	West	
7.	Sconce at South (Side) Entrance	North	
8.	Detail of South Façade	North	
9.	Detail of West Facade	East	
10.	Entrance Landing at Main Staircase	Southeast	
11.	Stairs to First Floor from Entrance Landing	Northwest	
12.	Detail of Wabaunsee County Map in Terrazzo Flooring	West	
13.	South (Side) Staircase	Northeast	
14.	Light Fixture in Main Corridor of First Floor	North	
15.	Main Courtroom on Second Floor	South	

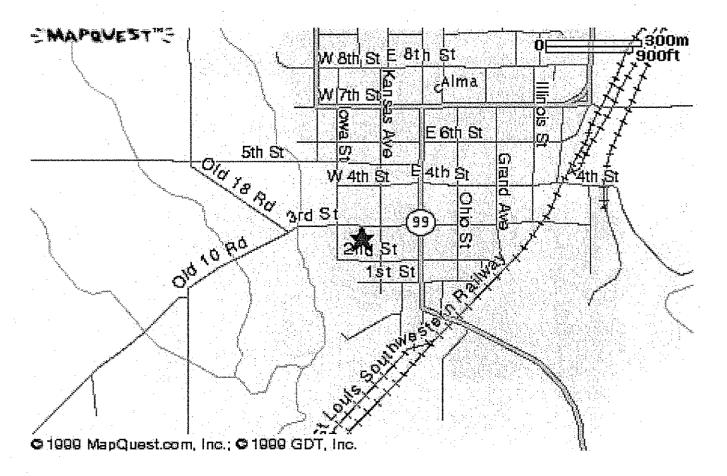
## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

Figure 1: City Plan of Alma, Kansas



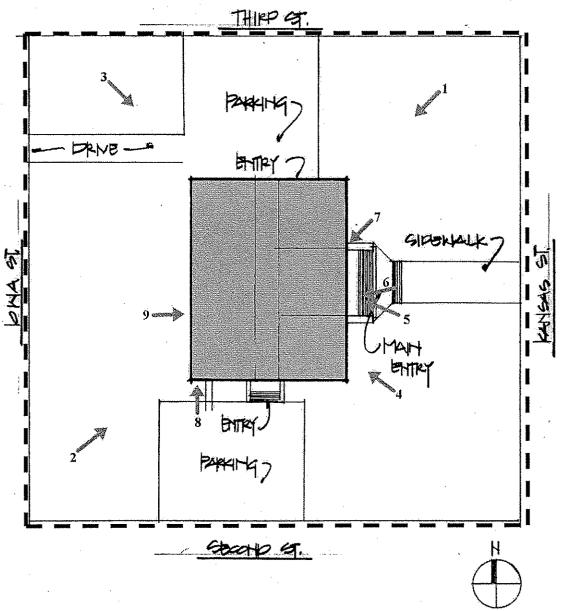
# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

Figure 2: Existing Site Plan



Approximate Scale: 1"=60'-0"

— — Boundary Line

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse, erected in 1931-1932, is historically significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of POLITICS/GOVERNMENT and under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE for its associations with the development of county courthouses in Kansas and its rarity as an Art Deco style courthouse. The historic significance of the Wabaunsee County Courthouse is based on its associations with the history and development of Kansas county courthouses that are documented in the Multiple Property Form, "Historic County Courthouses of Kansas." In particular, the property has direct associations to the historic contexts established in the Multiple Property Form—"The Role of the County Courthouse in Kansas Communities 1856-1950," "Twentieth Century Kansas County Courthouses and Their Changing Use: 1900-1950," and the "Architecture of Kansas Courthouses 1861-1950." The property's association with the evolution of Kansas county courthouses and their design dates to its construction in 1921-1932 and continues to 2000, the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date for determining eligibility of National Register properties. The property reflects the shift from traditional historical revival style courthouses of the early twentieth century to the use of modern courthouse designs in the 1930s, in particular the Art Deco style. In addition to the property's retention of association and location, it has a high degree of architectural integrity and is a representative example of its property type. The property type and larger historic contexts relating to the significance of the Wabaunsee County Courthouse are fully documented in the Multiple Property Form. The following commentary expands upon these larger contextual themes as they specifically relate to the Wabaunsee County Courthouse and documents the property's significance.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Wabaunsee County is located in northeastern Kansas along Interstate Highway 70 with the Kansas River forming its northern boundary. It has several small towns including Alma, the county seat; Harveyville; Eskridge; Keene; Alta Vista; Paxico; Wabaunsee; Wamego; Hessdale; McFarland; Maple Hill; and Newbury. The City of Alma is located centrally, near Mill Creek, in a valley along the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad.

In 1859, Anglo-European settlers, mostly of German descent, organized Wabaunsee County, which was originally home to the Pottawatomie and Kaw Indians. The settlers declared Wabaunsee as the temporary county seat, and county commissioners Henry Harvey, J.M. Hubbard, and G. Swanziger held early courthouse functions on the second floor of a school building. In 1866, an election determined Alma as the permanent county seat, with Alma defeating Wabaunsee, Newbury, and Eskridge by only 28 votes. County commissioners subsequently moved the county records into a small, wood, frame structure in Alma, which also served as a general store. In 1867, Alma residents erected a wood, frame structure<sup>2</sup> solely for the use of courthouse functions. Because the residents feared future challenges over the location of the county seat, they did not expend a large amount of

Author Unknown, Kansas State Historical Society, Vertical Files, Typed Notes.

The current Wabaunsee County Historical Museum is on the site of the original frame courthouse at 227 Missouri Street in Alma, Kansas.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Page 7

Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

money on the courthouse. They were correct in their foresight. Between 1867 and 1871, the county held three elections over the location of the county seat. Alma received the majority of the votes cast in 1871 and prevailed.<sup>3</sup>

With the county seat secured, the City of Alma formed the Court House Building Association, which consisted of 11 members including W.T. Aderhold, chairman; Joseph Treu, secretary; and S.H. Fairfield, treasurer. In 1871, the citizens of Alma erected a two-story, Italianate style, stone courthouse. With the addition of the courthouse, Alma boasted five structures: Schmitz & Meyer's store, Winkler's Hotel, Dierker's boarding house; the first wood, frame courthouse; and the new stone courthouse. Situated on the northeast corner of the present Courthouse Square, the courthouse measured 40 feet wide by 50 feet deep. At a cost of \$4,957, the committee expended \$2,157 for stonework, \$2,200 for carpentry, and \$660 for plaster. An addition enlarged the courthouse in 1893.

Plans for construction of a new courthouse began in 1928. At this time, voters of the 13 townships of Wabaunsee County petitioned the county commissioners to pass a resolution to add a one Mill levy to build a new courthouse. On August 9, 1928, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously accepted the signatures of 1,903 qualified voters (only 270 signatures were required to add the levy to the tax roll). A tax levy over a period of several years funded the construction of the courthouse and precluded the need to issue bonds. Over a period of years, the county commissioners also purchased portions of the Courthouse Square. The purchase of the Joe Sander property in January 1931 completed acquisition of the entire block.

The architectural firm of W.E. Glover of Topeka, Kansas designed the courthouse in 1930 and the construction firm of Shuss & Henderson of Larned, Kansas erected the courthouse. Shuss & Henderson commenced construction in early 1931 and completed the building in April 1932 at a cost of \$164,989.21.<sup>7</sup> The cost of jail equipment and office furnishings was estimated at an additional \$9,000 and \$20,000, respectively. At that time, the City of Alma razed the 1871 stone courthouse. In 1975, the county commissioners installed the current elevator in a shaft in the space that was originally designed for an elevator that was never installed.<sup>8</sup>

#### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A as an important representative example of the second and third generation courthouses erected in a wave of new courthouse construction that occurred in the early twentieth century in Kansas. These buildings replaced aged and obsolete courthouse buildings erected in the state's earlier settlement period. The retention of its historic architectural integrity as well as integrity of setting and associations allows it to convey information about its date of construction and function.

Author Unknown, Kansas State Historical Society, Vertical Files, Handwritten Notes.

Author Unknown, "Wabaunsee County's Court House Dedication," *The Alma Signal* (28 April 1932).

Author Unknown, Wabaunsee County Directory and History, 38.

Wabaunsee County Clerk, Kansas State Historical Society, Vertical Files, Typed Deed of Original County Courthouse.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Wabaunsee County's Court House Dedication."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Wabaunsee County Court House Observes 50th Anniversary."

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas Wabaunsee County Courthouse Alma, Kansas

#### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse (1931–1932) is significant under Criterion C for its Art Deco architecture reflecting the influence of the American Modern Movement in architecture. It is an example of the shift from classical to modern styles with its symmetrical façades with references to classical columns, and its use of Art Deco stylistic elements. In particular, the vertical emphasis created by the use of square columns, geometric forms, window spandrels with stylized floral motifs, zigzag ornamentation at the roofline, metal frame casement windows, and metal door grilles with stylized detailing. As such, its restrained styling clearly reflects the adaptation of Art Deco design to the classical courthouse form, which is typical of Kansas county courthouses erected in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Because the courthouse retains nearly all of its exterior and interior features, it is an excellent example of the work of architect W. E. Glover, and it is the only Kansas county courthouse designed by Glover. Walter Earl Glover was born in Indiana in 1889. He was a graduate of Topeka High School and studied at the Kansas State College. He entered the University of Illinois and studied engineering and architecture, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Architecture in 1915. He worked as an architect for the Santa Fe Railroad between 1915 and 1918. During World War I, he worked in the architectural department of the United States Navy in Washington, D.C. In 1919, he returned to Kansas and opened an office in Topeka. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects and the Kansas Society of Architects.9

The Wabaunsee County Courthouse is also architecturally significant for its retention of its original floor plan configuration and hierarchy of space that is typical of many early twentieth century Kansas courthouses. Kansas courthouses of this period are generally defined by three or four floors, which have a hierarchy of functions located off a main corridor and are accessed by one or more staircases. The ground floor is either at grade level or slightly sunken and houses the auxiliary functions such as the boiler room, facility manager's offices, and storage. Historically, the ground floor also housed community rooms and toilets for those travelling far distances, which often required a night's stay. The finishes of the ground floor are often not as elaborate as the upper, more public floors. In the case of this courthouse, it housed the county superintendent's office, the community room, farm agent's room, ladies restroom, boiler room, and fuel room. The first floor, which is the most highly utilized floor, is generally elevated from grade level and approached by an exterior grand staircase. The first floor housed offices frequently utilized by the public. In this case, it housed the offices of the county clerk, register of deeds, county treasurer, county engineer, and board of commissioners' room. As was typical, the second floor housed the courtroom, witness room, and the offices of the sheriff, county attorney, district judge, clerk of the district court, probate judge, and court reporter. The courtroom, as in other courthouses erected in this period, was on the opposite side of the primary entrance, just opposite of the central grand staircase. The third floor housed the jail, two jury rooms, and a storage room. The building featured steel fireproof vaults, washrooms, and toilets on each floor.

William E. Connelly, *History of Kansas State and People* (Chicago/New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1928), 2304.

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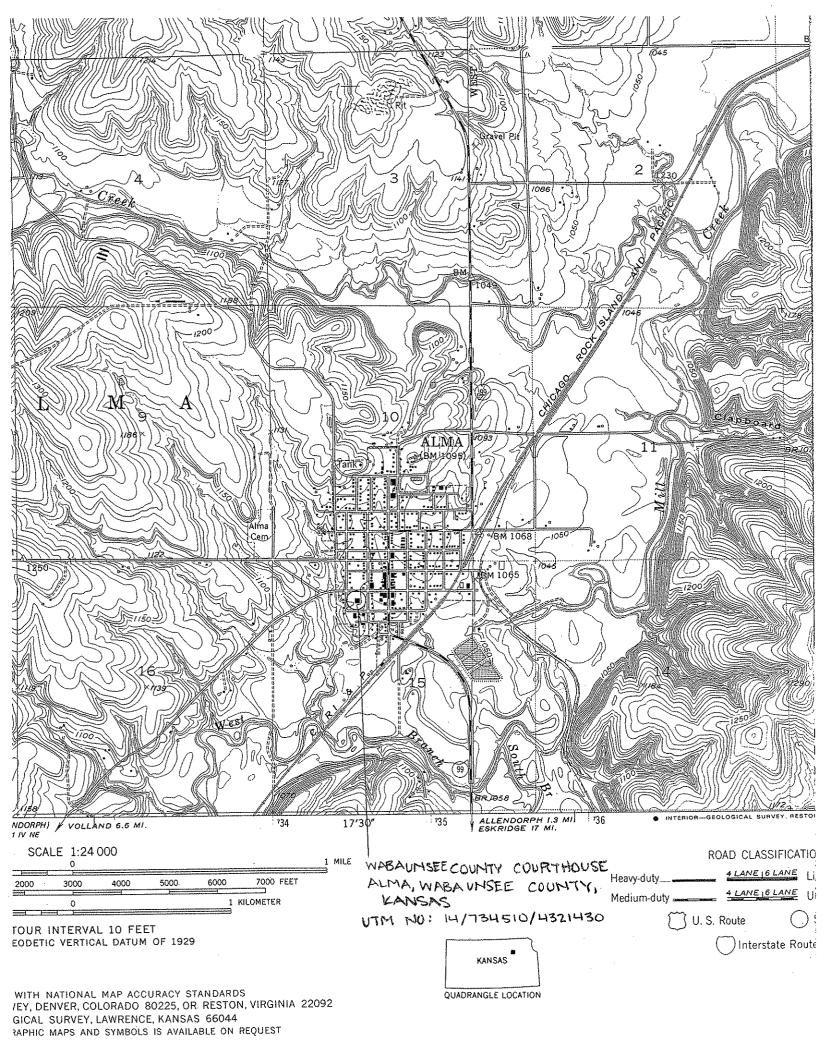
"Wabaunsee County Court House Observes 50th Anniversary." Vertical Files. Kansas State Historical Society.

#### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property includes the entirety of Block 11 in the Original Town of Alma, Wabaunsee County, Kansas that includes the following: on the south, the northern boundary of Second Street; on the west, the eastern boundary of Iowa Street; on the north, the southern boundary of Third Street; and on the east, the western boundary of Kansas Avenue.

#### VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property is based on the entire parcel of Block 11 that has a traditional courthouse function. Natural boundaries are provided by Second Street, Iowa Street, Third Street, and Kansas Avenue.



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